

## Senate Bill No. 129

### CHAPTER 336

An act to amend Section 77202 of the Government Code, relating to trial courts.

[Approved by Governor September 6, 2003. Filed with Secretary of State September 8, 2003.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 129, Escutia. Trial courts: budget process.

Existing law requires the Judicial Council to adopt policies and procedures governing budgeting in the trial courts, and specifies the duties of the Administrative Director of the Courts in this regard.

This bill would require the Judicial Council to circulate proposed amendments to those policies and procedures, as specified, and provide for the duties of the Administrative Office of the Courts with respect to requests to transfer funds.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 77202 of the Government Code is amended to read:

77202. (a) The Legislature shall make an annual appropriation to the Judicial Council for the general operations of the trial courts based on the request of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council's trial court budget request shall meet the needs of all trial courts in a manner which promotes equal access to the courts statewide. The Judicial Council shall allocate the appropriation to the trial courts in a manner that best ensures the ability of the courts to carry out their functions, promotes implementation of statewide policies, and promotes the immediate implementation of efficiencies and cost-saving measures in court operations, in order to guarantee access to justice to citizens of the state.

The Judicial Council shall ensure that its trial court budget request and the allocations made by it reward each trial court's implementation of efficiencies and cost-saving measures.

These efficiencies and cost-saving measures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) The sharing or merger of court support staff among trial courts across counties.



(2) The assignment of any type of case to a judge for all purposes commencing with the filing of the case and regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

(3) The establishment of a separate calendar or division to hear a particular type of case.

(4) In rural counties, the use of all court facilities for hearings and trials of all types of cases and the acceptance of filing documents in any case.

(5) The use of alternative dispute resolution programs, such as arbitration.

(6) The development and use of automated accounting and case-processing systems.

(b) (1) The Judicial Council shall adopt policies and procedures governing practices and procedures for budgeting in the trial courts in a manner that best ensures the ability of the courts to carry out their functions and may delegate the adoption to the Administrative Director of the Courts. The Administrative Director of the Courts shall establish budget procedures and an annual schedule of budget development and management consistent with these rules.

(2) The Trial Court Policies and Procedures shall specify the process for a court to transfer existing funds between or among the budgeted program components to reflect changes in the court's planned operation or to correct technical errors. If the process requires a trial court to request approval of a specific transfer of existing funds, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall review the request to transfer funds and respond within 30 days of receipt of the request. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall respond to the request for approval or denial to the affected court, in writing, with copies provided to the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst Office, the Legislature's budget committees, and the court's affected labor organizations.

(3) The Judicial Council shall circulate for comment to all affected entities any amendments proposed to the Trial Court Policies and Procedures as they relate to budget monitoring and reporting. Final changes shall be adopted at a meeting of the Judicial Council.

